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ners and morals of their caste. She might discipline them with slaps and scolding but was usually indulgent. She taught her children to look to her brother as their authority, and might either report their conduct to him or (more commonly) try to shield them from his correction. A woman's duties to her adult son were to assist in cooking for him, to serve him with food along with other men before she and other women had eaten, and to assist in care of the house. She should offer him counsel and comfort, respecting his wishes but attempting to dissuade him from wrong. Her own moral conduct in the village was a part of her duty to her children. If she infringed the religious laws her shame fell also on them and they were the most likely persons to be visited with supernatural vengeance. A woman should accept the suggestions of her adult son with regard to her conduct. If he became her karanavan she theoretically owed him obedience in law. 593 [86] [604] [626]

A child should respect his mother's teaching, although strict obedience to her was not demanded before the age of five or six. Throughout her life he should revere her, remembering that he owed to her his membership of his taravād and all the birth-status rights of his caste. For her sake he should maintain right relations with his matrilineal kinsfolk, submitting to his male elders and protecting his sisters and their children. A man should protect his mother from slander or physical harm. When he entered the village after an absence he must go first to greet her. While he stayed there he should live in his natal house and make himself available to his mother's requests. He should not incur her jealousy by visiting a wife for long periods in the daytime, or by eating frequently in the house of a wife or of friends. In all things he should place his mother's comfort and the interests of the taravād above his private concerns. In her old age he must offer comfort and companionship to his mother and after death must perform funeral rites and make annual offerings on behalf of her soul. Neglect of the mother by an adult son was the height of impiety. The lineage goddess was believed to inflict sickness on an impious son. [769] [776] [753]

The etiquette of behavior between mother and adult son required mutual respect and a certain restraint on both sides. Each stood when the other entered the room, although they might later sit together and converse informally. They discussed questions of property and the affairs of the taravād in serious confidence, but undignified gossip and talk touching on sexual matters were prohibited between them. 593 576 ●

603 took upon herself much of the moral training of her grandchildren. It
[869] was chiefly from the grandmother that children learned religious my-
thology and stories from their taravād's history. If she was the oldest
woman of the house and if her son was karanavan, a woman of strong
personality might virtually direct the household, protecting the grand-
children both from their mother's indulgence and from their uncles'
displeasure. She seldom inflicted corporal punishment but was obeyed
[861] by young children more readily than the mother. As they grew to
[858] maturity a woman tended to show indulgent pride in her grandsons
as the pillars of her old age. By contrast she might show jealousy of
her granddaughters and be a harsher judge of their manners and
morals than was their mother.

MAN-SISTER'S SON

604 A karanavan had special rights in and obligations to his sisters' chil-
429 dren, some of which have been detailed. As their legal guardian he
exercised the rights and obligations which normally accrue to the
legal father in the higher patrilineal castes of India. He was respon-
604 sible for his nephews' training in the laws and morality of their caste,
86 in literacy, in agricultural work, and in military skills. Much of this
training he often dispensed in person either before or after he became
karanavan. He was responsible for maintaining the junior men of his
taravād and for guarding and, if possible, augmenting the ancestral
property on their behalf. In turn they owed him obedience, loyalty,
and submissive respect. A karanavan might inflict a beating on a dis-
obedient nephew under about the age of sixteen or might order a
younger brother to do this on his behalf.

604 Relationships with all mother's brothers within the property group
were modeled on that with the karanavan. A man owed all of them
respect and obedience within the framework of the karanavan's juris-
diction. Often a boy's junior mother's brothers were absent from the
taravād. When they were home the mother's own brothers took a
special interest in him. They might play with him indulgently until
he was about the age of three. After this he learned to respect them,
to be quiet in their presence, and to fear his mother's report of his
ill conduct to them. As he grew older it was usually from his mother's
own brothers that a boy received detailed training in agricultural mat-
ters and it was they who most frequently chastised him. Throughout
[561] their lives a man owed obedience and loyalty to all men of senior
[813] generation in his taravād, and after their deaths, regular offerings
[969] in propitiation of their spirits.

• [596] The etiquette of behavior between a man and his mother's brothers

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was formalized to the point of avoidance. A boy or man might not touch his mother's brother. Before entering the uncle's presence he removed his upper clothing as a mark of respect. He might not speak first to the uncle but stood with arms folded and head bowed, attentively awaiting commands. He might not sit before his uncle except at mealtimes; he then sat down last and rose as soon as the uncle's meal was finished. When summoned for a lengthy interview he stood half hidden behind a pillar, holding his hand before his mouth lest his breath should reach the hearer. He might not chew betel leaves, smoke, spit, or use any but the most serious and respectful language in the presence of his senior. These rules of intercourse were most strict in the relationship with the *kāranavan*. For this reason a *kāranavan* absented himself as much as possible from family gatherings, living on the upper floor of the granary among his age mates of other lineages who came to visit him. With junior mother's brothers, who were more intimately responsible for his education, a youth's behavior was necessarily more relaxed. Even so, he observed the greatest possible formality, walked several feet behind them, and avoided them when he could.

A man should show loyalty to his mother's brothers in relations with outsiders, if necessary defending them with his life. He was expected to identify with them, receiving and perpetuating the noble traditions of his *taravād*. In fact Nayers did show great pride in the elders of their *taravād* as a group, exhibiting their virtues and hiding their weaknesses in the presence of strangers. There was regularly, however, deep hostility in their interpersonal relationships. The Nayers of today are well aware of this and expect acrimonious rivalry between the men of a *taravād*; hence, they say, the need for formal etiquette and strict ranking on the basis of age. A Nayar will speak of himself as bound to his *taravād* through natural love for his mother and sisters, and obliged for their sakes to maintain outward decorum in his relations with matrilineal kinsmen. In a modified form this suppressed hostility traditionally extended to all the men of the own, first ascending and second ascending generations. All male elders in the *taravād* might be collectively called *kāranavar* (singular, *kāranavan*). Within the property group they were numbered in order of age (irrespective of generation) as first, second, and third men. All owed loyalty and obedience to those above them and protection to those below them, but all envied their seniors and feared the rivalry of juniors. The mother's own brothers were, however, the prototypes for this generalized rivalry. Whether or not Nayers experienced Oedipal hostility

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seven or eight, but he would not inflict heavy punishment unless he was sure of the child's grandmother's and her karanavan's support. After she had undergone the tali rite a man was forbidden to touch any junior woman of his taravād. His relationship with his sister's daughter thereafter became very distant. In accordance with rules associated with incest prohibitions, he might not be alone in a room with her and would scrupulously avoid suspicion of intimacy. He would absent himself when her husband entered the house, remaining on the outer veranda, in the separate men's building, or in the house of his wife. A woman must remain standing and remove her upper clothing when her mother's brother entered her presence. She must not speak first to him, must not laugh in his presence, and must respond with extreme submissiveness to his requests. When possible a man would communicate advice to his sister's daughter through some kinswoman senior to both of them. Thus, except to serve him with food, a woman had little direct intercourse with her mother's brothers.

Modern Nayars admit freely that the partial avoidance between men of the taravād, on the one hand, and that between men and women junior to them in the taravād, on the other, have quite different foundations. The former is a defense against aggression, the latter against desire. Nayars partially avoid their younger sisters and nieces, it is admitted, because otherwise they might be tempted to commit incest with them. As things are, in speaking with others, men often express a respectful tenderness toward their sisters' daughters and a pride in their qualities. Because of the difference of sex, and therefore of ambitions and interests, there is much less potential conflict here than in the relationship with the sister's son. By an orthodox karanavan in particular, its young women are seen as the fine flower of his taravād. Whatever may be his more selfish inner feelings, he expresses gladness when there are many of them to perpetuate his matrilineal group. For their sakes and for the sake of the heirs they may bring him, he welcomes their husbands to his home. When the latter are aristocrats of higher caste, his pride seems the more easily to outweigh any potential hostility toward them.

In orthodox homes today, women's attitudes to their mothers' brothers seem to be variously compounded of fear and admiration. A woman fears her uncle's anger and may resent his harshness toward her brothers and sons. If, however, he manages her household with equity and if his reputation stands high in his neighborhood, he may become a distant hero in her eyes.

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As a form of group marriage, the Nayar institutions clearly will not fit the definition of marriage proposed in *Notes and Queries in Anthropology*.⁹ It did, however, legitimize children, which seems to me the minimum necessary criterion applicable to all those unions which anthropologists customarily label "marriage." As a new definition of marriage which will cover all the familiar types, the Nayar case, and several other unusual cases which are commonly recognized as marriage, I have suggested the following: "Marriage is a relationship between a woman and one or more other persons which provides that a child born to the woman, under circumstances not prohibited by the rules of the relationship, shall be accorded full birth-status rights in his society or social stratum" (Gough, 1959: 32).

Nayar men seem always to have chosen wives younger than themselves. A man ranked above his wife, who had to show respect to him. In the presence of her kin she remained standing before him and seldom spoke to him; she would not be seen talking to him in public outside her home. A woman never used her husband's name; she addressed and referred to him by plural honorific pronouns. Hypergamous marriage relationships were even more formal than those between Nayars. Caste rules of pollution prevented the husband from receiving food from his wife's kinsfolk. During the daytime, after taking his purifying bath in the morning, he was forbidden to touch her or any member of her family.

THE FATHER AND HIS KIN

The most peculiar characteristic of the Central Nayars is that although a form of marriage existed they did not institutionalize the elementary family of one man, one woman, and their children. This group was in no sense a legal, residential, commensal, productive, or distributive unit. An individual man had no legal rights in a particular wife and her children. He did not reside with them, did not eat regularly with them, did not produce with or for them, and he did not customarily distribute goods to his children. A woman had no legal rights in a particular man—only the right that one or more men admit paternity of her children. Similarly, a child correctly begotten was assured of legal paternity, but a group of men might fulfill this role and the child had no subsequent claims on any of them. It might perhaps be claimed that the group composed of the tāli tier, his ritual wife, and her children born subsequently received cere-

⁹ "Marriage is a union between a man and a woman such that children born to the woman are the legitimate offspring of both parents" (*Notes and Queries*, 1951: 110).

582 favored wife, and that such a man might well arrange for a nephew's first sambandham relationship to be with a daughter of this wife. It seems probable also that such deliberately arranged matrilineal cross-cousin marriages increased in popularity in the nineteenth century, as plural marriages gradually gave place to monogamy. My data suggest also that deliberately arranged patrilineal cross-cousin marriages may have become more popular in the late nineteenth century, as fathers became instrumental in maintaining and educating their sons.¹⁰

[178] AFFINITY

602 The members of ego's father's household had less significance to
592 him in their interpersonal relationships than as affines or *bandhukkar* (singular, *bandhu*) of his household as a whole. The *bandhus* or "joined ones" of a household were acquired through the sambandham relationship. They comprised the current spouses of the property group's members, together with the households from which these people came. *Bandham* (affinity) had no practical significance beyond this range.

602 Because of the transience of particular marriages, affinal relations-
[596] ships, like those with patrilineal kin, were a matter of etiquette rather than of rights and obligations. Affines of the same caste might visit each other informally and must be received with hospitality. It was also common to invite to the feasts of life-crisis rites the actual spouses of the dwelling group and any close matrilineal kin they might wish to bring with them. Affines, however, had no ceremonial obligations on these occasions and were not under the same categorical obligation to attend as were the representatives of enangar households.

602 Politeness—masking a greater or lesser degree of covert hostility—
596 characterized affinal relationships in general. A man treated his wife's male elders of senior generations with respect, and stood in their presence unless invited to eat with them. They welcomed him with cordial gravity and with the respect due to his caste status if he were a man of higher caste.

"Both types of cross-cousin marriage have however decreased in frequency as a result of the urbanization and mobility of the past thirty years. In one Cochin village in 1949, 7 per cent of living Nayar women had married the father's own or classificatory maternal nephew; less than 2 per cent had married the own or classificatory mother's brother's son. Taking the women of six lineages over five generations, 14 per cent of marriages were to the father's own or classificatory nephew; 9 per cent to the own or classificatory uncle's son. In Walluvanad, of the women of nine lineages over five generations, 11 per cent had married the father's own or classificatory nephew; about 5 per cent, the own or classificatory uncle's son. Patrilineal cross-cousin marriage is of course impossible in hypergamous unions.

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androus and divorce was freely practiced, but a princess probably did, 595
not regularly entertain more than one husband at a time. Older Nam 554
budiri Brahman husbands often introduced their own younger kins 583
men into the palace; for this reason both matrilineal cross-cousin
marriage and paternal parallel-cousin marriage were common in Brah-
man-royal unions. Princes, chiefs, and high-ranking Nambudiri Brah-
mans were sometimes polygynous. Their wives, however, were prob-
ably seldom polyandrous; for aristocrats seem often to have exercised
the power to monopolize the attentions of their favorite Nayar wives.
They were therefore more sure of the paternity of their Nayar sons,
upon whom they sometimes conferred military or political offices.

In all hypergamous unions the husband observed the normal all-564
India caste rules of pollution except with regard to sexual intercourse. 602
He might not receive food from his wife's caste and had little com- 593
munication with her or her children in the daytime. Affinal relation- 554
ships were correspondingly more restricted than in the retainer castes. 833
for a woman had very little communication with her husband's natal 783
kin; she and her children used no kinship terms for them. If the wife
was of lower social as well as ritual rank than the husband she did not
visit his natal home. Conversely, princesses do not seem to have de-
meaned themselves socially by visiting the homes of their ritually
higher-ranking husbands. A Nayar wife who was of similar social rank
to her Brahman or temple-servant husband might occasionally visit
the womenfolk of his home, but she was received in an outbuilding
and might not eat with them. Similarly, husbands in hypergamous
unions had highly formalized and restricted relationships with the
matrilineal kinsmen of their wives. The wives' elder kinsmen were ac-
corded the respect due their age; the husband, that due his superior
ritual rank.

Relationships between matrilineal kin among the aristocrats were a 602
sharpened version of those found among retainer Nayars. Between 576 ●
men, the etiquette associated with age rank was highly stereotyped. 554
Among the senior princes who were likely to compete for political
office it reached the point of avoidance, a condition facilitated by
their separate residences as *sthānis*. The etiquette of respect was
similarly elaborated between men and women. After the age of fifteen
a prince might converse with older women of his palace only by ap-
pointment and in some public place. He must scrupulously avoid the
presence of younger kinswomen from the time of their *tāli* rite. In
the potentially larger property groups of the aristocrats these rules
of etiquette obviously militated against the expression of aggression
between men as well as preventing incestuous
relations between the sexes. 154 835

591 shared a home with the wife's mother and sometimes with others of
592 her matrilineal elders. Twenty-four lived neolocally in a house con-
178 taining no natal kinsfolk of either partner; of these 24 couples, 7
lived in a private house acquired by the husband; 11 lived in a house
jointly acquired by husband and wife; and 6 lived in a house acquired
by the wife.

591 As these figures suggest, duolocality is still the accepted norm of
178 residence for younger married couples in Central Kerala, and avun-
[434] culocality slightly less so for those in North Kerala. In both areas
participation in a market economy has caused a shift toward ne-
[562]olocality, especially for middle-aged couples. In the North Kerala
village, however, the modern prevalence of cash-crop farming has
carried this tendency further than has small-scale urban wage work
in the village in Cochin. At the same time, because of the coöperation
of North Kerala men in cultivation, the male sex normally determines
the pattern of residence. Couples live avunculocally, neolocally, or
even patrilocally because men must live on their land. In the Cochin
591 village, by contrast, the male shift from military to small-scale salaried
562 employment has only partially undermined the position of women as
464 the sex which remains on the ancestral land and for which the land
178 is cultivated by lower-caste servants. It is still women whose claims,
in the majority of cases, determine the choice of residence in Central
Kerala. Women, whenever possible, remain on their own land and
men adapt themselves to this condition by living duolocally, matri-
locally, or in some cases neolocally in a house partly provided by the
wife.

Kinship Relationships

613 MATRILINEAL KIN

• 576 The etiquette of behavior between matrilineal kin was traditionally
the same in North as in Central Kerala, but the emphases in terms of
rights and obligations were somewhat different.

591 The karanavan's ultimate legal authority was much the same as in
the Central kingdoms. However, he lacked domestic authority over
women and their small children, who resided elsewhere. Among
adults, avunculocal residence caused great emphasis to be placed on
the unity of the matrilineally related men, who should coöperate
in work and property management for the good of the taravād as a
whole. Covertly, their relationships tended to be rivalrous and hostile.
Open disputes between them were often avoided through the separate
allocation of plots to individual men. The distance thus created be-

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tween them also permitted the observance of the type of very formal etiquette that existed in the Central kingdoms.

A peculiarity of strict avunculocal residence is that it separates a woman from both her sons and her daughters after they are married. The sons return to their ancestral estates and the daughters leave with their husbands. The relationships of mother and children were therefore less continuous than in Central Kerala. However, various particular arrangements did often permit women to live with some of their children for a great part of their lives. Cross-cousin marriage was one of these. Matrilateral cross-cousin marriage was the most popular, because by this means the daughter of a karanavan and his wife could be brought into their dwelling group as the wife of the karanavan's nephew. Patrilinear cross-cousin marriage was also popular but less common.¹ It was less advantageous unless a shift from the normal residential arrangements could be made. This sometimes occurred when a karanavan succeeded in arranging a marriage between his son and his sister's daughter. The son might then remain on his father's ancestral estate for part of his life in patrilocal residence. Any property which he developed there would pass to his wife's descendants as matrilineal heirs of the estate. In this way a woman might keep one of her sons living with her for a large part of her life.

Women were also commonly reunited with their sons at divorce or widowhood, for they would then return to their taravāds to live. Whatever the circumstances of residence, moreover, a man should place his duties to mother and sisters above those to wife and children. The ideals of devotion and reverence to matrilineal kinswomen were the same as in Central Kerala. Brother and sister were drawn apart by the normal rules of residence but, like mother and son, came together if the sister were divorced or widowed and returned to her taravād. A woman also returned to her taravād for several months at the time of childbirth, for every child had to be born in its own taravād.

¹ In the Kottayam village already cited, 12 per cent of Nambiar commoner women who had been married had at some time married their father's own or classificatory sister's son; 8 per cent had married their own or classificatory maternal uncle's son. Cross-cousin marriage is, as everywhere in Kerala, more common among the aristocratic lineages of village headmen and chiefs. Of the women of six village headmen's lineages over a period of five generations, 17 per cent had married their father's own or classificatory sister's son, and 13 per cent their own or classificatory maternal uncle's son. Patrilinear cross-cousin marriage is thus more usual in North than in Central Kerala. One reason for this is that fathers in North Kerala more commonly educate and endow their sons. By this means a father acquires the right to a voice in arranging his son's marriage, often to the father's niece.

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605 oblivious of these affairs. If the husband found out he might keep
836 quiet or might divorce his wife, but he would not be likely to take
837 vengeance.

AFFINES

602 The etiquette of behavior between affines was practically identical
596 in North and Central Kerala, but in the North they had recognized
184 obligations.

602 During her marriage a woman became partly integrated into her
592 husband's property group. Her husband could request her to cook and
613 do limited domestic work for any of his matrilineal kin. She would
[593] do so regularly if she lived in an avunculocal extended family. In
such households there was a certain authority structure between the
wives of matrilineally related men, based on the relative age of the
husbands. The oldest woman directed the group and the younger
ones should obey her. Matters went most smoothly when a woman
was the mother of her husband's niece-in-law. Older women in
avunculocal households did not, however, have the unequivocal
authority over junior wives which is found in the patrilocal extended
families of the higher patrilineal castes of India. They would never
beat a girl and usually courted her affection. If the young wife was
dissatisfied she might urge her husband to move to a separate house,
go home for long periods, or even seek a divorce.

[598] In strict avunculocal residence the karanavan's wife had domestic
[607] authority, keeping the keys of storerooms and directing the younger
[604] wives. However, if any woman born into the taravād returned to
live in it she could demand the internal management of the home as
a right. The relations between a woman and her husband's sisters and
nieces were thus often strained. Soon after such a natal kinswoman
returned to her home in this way, the karanavan would try to move his
wife into a separate building to avoid feminine disputes. However, a
younger wife often lived for several years in the same house with her
husband's widowed mother and was expected to obey her with good
grace.

602 A woman and her husband's older matrilineal kinsmen avoided one
613 another—except on ceremonial occasions—because of incest prohibi-
[604] tions. She was accorded meticulous respect by her husband's younger
matrilineal kin, who usually feared and resented her influence over
her husband. Gruesome proverbs told of the tortures which men and
women would like to inflict on the wives of their elder brothers and
uncles, and it was said that "If the uncle's wife and nephews sit down
peaceably together, *nux vomica* and bitter gourds will turn to honey."

unless he has been admitted by certain formalities to the village to which he has emigrated, is considered to belong to his original home. 621

The village is divided into two *Karas* (or *Amsams*), the northern *Kara* and the southern *Kara*. The division is arbitrary and has no significance. A man from Kavalam belonging to the North or South *Kara* is treated in another village as belonging to the same place.

The *Bhagavati* (goddess) Temple in the village was, before the government took possession of it, owned by two *Karas* jointly. 576

In each of the *Karas* there are five *Āsāns* or *Pramanis*. They keep *Kalaris* and are honoured and respected by all the *Nāyars* in the district. No common *Nāyar* is allowed to sit in their presence, to enter their kitchen, or to call their women without the title of *Kunjamma* (or *Ladyship*). 621, 622, 874, 576

The seventy-five families which the *Kara* contains are divided between the five *Āsāns*. Each *Āsān*, therefore, has a general authority over all the families, and special rights over the fifteen families immediately under his control.

In all matters of ceremony the *Āsāns* have to be informed beforehand. Without their presence, no public ceremony of any family is supposed to be valid. All the public functions of the village are done by them. The ceremonies of the temple, for example, are under their control. They are the people who summon the *Karakkars*, or the villagers, to assemble and settle matters of importance. The villagers settle in such assemblies, things relating to the community, such as public festivals, the expenditure of *Karaynam* (common to the village) funds and the behaviour of people who have acted against the customs of the village. If a marriage ceremony had not been properly conducted, it comes before them. If an *Āsān* had not been properly invited, that matter also comes up for consideration. Instances of punishments inflicted by the village on individuals and families were not uncommon till lately. I remember a particular case in which the villagers as a body led by their *Āsān* walked out of the marriage (*Talikettu*) *pandal* because the order of precedence was not kept up. The family of a squire had, during these hard days, become poor, and a rich squire who, in order of precedence, came below him was given a seat of honour. The result was that the whole community walked out as a protest, and the *Kalyanam* had to be held over again to the satisfaction of the poor *Āsān* and his loyal friends. 622, 596, 623, 522, 585, 626

How strong this organisation is will be seen from the following incident. A gentleman, when coming from Madras, had a Christian friend with him, and his servant who waited for him at Alleppey was eating his food when both of them entered the boat. It is a very rigid custom that no food can be taken in the company, or even in the proximity of any lower caste, and Christians are considered to be such. The result of it was that when they got home the news got abroad that the *Nāyar* servant had eaten with a Christian in the boat, and the whole village 264, 564, 626

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[114] to grow up. There is one important custom (and Mr. Ananta Krishna Aiyer forgets to notice it)¹ which forbids two generations of girls being married together. When girls become mothers at sixteen, generations mingle frequently and often there may be girls younger than oneself who are one's mother's sisters and, therefore, stand logically in the same position as one's mother. The custom is that they should not undergo the ceremony together, though this is strictly kept up only in richer families.

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[613] The first step to this ceremony is a village and *enangar* council. The prominent people of the village and the *enangars* are invited and the *Kārnāvan* takes counsel with them as to the various arrangements with regard to the ceremony. After the [787]
[791] *Kaniyan*, or the medicine man (who is also the astrologer and magician), has fixed the auspicious hour for the ceremony, a *pandal*, or a decorated tent, is put up in the presence of the village elders, in the *Muttam*. In the middle of the tent so erected is kept the *Asamangalyam* (Sanskrit word *Asta*=8, *mangalyam*=happiness giving). The *Asamangalyam* consists of a measure of paddy, some rice, an absolutely white cloth (to show purity), an arrow (to show the warlike character), lighted lamp (uninterrupted prosperity), a looking-glass, and a *cheppu* (which is the Malabar equivalent of a powder puff), and a blossom of the coco-nut palm.

The ceremony of *Talikettu* can take place any time of the day, only it must be an auspicious hour. Evening is preferred because more gaiety is possible. Early in the morning the girls are taken to the family tanks by the women of the *Enangar* house, and have an oil bath. After this they are elaborately dressed. They put on various ornaments used only for that day. All the families, of course, do not possess these ornaments; generally, only one or two families in the village have them, but they are available for all on such occasions.

[301] The tier of the *Tali*, who is generally a priest, or sometimes a *Kahatriya* lord, is invited, and he stops at a house near by. The day before the ceremony he goes, accompanied by the village elders on an elephant, in a procession to the nearest temple and gets the *Tali* consecrated by the priest of the temple. In these days I have seen the *Tali*-tier taken in a motor car to the temple, though the slow-moving elephant is more impressive.

At the auspicious hour the bridegroom, in a warrior's dress (with sword, etc.), arrives at the house, accompanied by a party of the villagers. He is welcomed by the male members of the family, and taken to a seat of honour. There the brother [576]
[608] (own or collateral) of the girl washes his feet (this is a custom of extreme politeness prevalent among the Hindus). Then the brides are brought into the *pandal*. They make a *pradikshana* (go round the *pandal* by their left three or seven times). The eldest girl's father's sister's son (i.e., her marriageable cousin) gives some brand-new pieces of fine silk cloth, and then the priest or the warrior ties the *Tali* round the girls' necks. This is followed by a huge feast which goes on for four days. On

¹ *Cochin Tribes and Castes*, vol. II, chapter on the Nayars.

are treated to a sumptuous dinner, and at the auspicious hour the bridegroom and his party proceed to a conspicuous part of the house, where a seat is specially provided for him. On either side of the seat and a little in front of it, are placed two lighted lamps. There the bridegroom and the bride make obeisance to the *kāranavans* and other elderly men present there, distribute presents of money to the Brahmans who pronounce their benediction upon the conjugal pair. The bridegroom or his *kāranavans* in the northern parts of the State give her the wedding dress in which she is dressed. The bride is then ushered in, either by her mother or by an elderly member of the family when cloths are given to the bride by the bridegroom. In some places the bridegroom and his party chew betel leaf and nut, while they chat with the women. After a while, the party begins to break up, one by one, wishing the couple all happiness, and the women, departing one by one, leaving the couple alone, one of them closing the door from outside. About daybreak, next morning, the bridegroom departs from the house, leaving under the pillow a sum of money according to his means. The *sambandham* is now complete. The woman resides in her family, and her husband visits her there. A few days after this, the bridegroom's mother or some senior woman of his family sends some cloths including *pīva mundu* (superior cloths) and *thōrtha mundu* (towels) and also some gingelly oil for her use during the next six months. Every six months, she does the same, and on the festivals of *Onam*, *Vishu* and *Thiruvīthira* she is given a little money, arecanut, betel, tobacco and banana. Before long the women of the bridegroom's family express their wish to see her, and have her brought to their family by a few women of the former. She stays there for a few days and is sent back to her own house with presents of ornaments and clothes from senior women of the house. After this she is at liberty to visit her husband's house on any day, auspicious or inauspicious.

In the Chittur and Talapilly Taluks of the State as also in the Palghat Taluk of South Malabar, this form of marriage is called *Kidakkōra* or *Kidakka kalyānam* (the bed chamber ceremony). As part of this ceremony, a declaration is made by one of the bridegroom's party to the senior female of the bride's house in the presence of the assembled guests in the following terms:— " Let this youth visit this damsel for

the caste or the grown-up women cook and serve the food to the inmates who sit in the dining hall with their own dishes or with plantain leaves placed before them. In ordinary and poor families the cooking and serving are done by women alone. ²⁵²₅₅₆

In grand festivities in which food is served to a large number of the caste-men, the preparations are similar to those served at Brahman feasts, a full account of which will be given when I deal with them. ⁵⁷⁴₅₆₄ ²⁵²

The Nayars rank below the Ambalavásis and above the polluting castes. Even among themselves there are various grades of social precedence, and the members of higher sub-castes do not freely mingle with those of the lower. Men of the higher sub-castes may sometimes eat with those of the lower, but their women never take their meals with those lower to them in the social scale. It is curious to note that in grand feasts and on ceremonial occasions, good many formalities have to be observed in the allocation of seats in the dining hall for guests according to their social status, and any violation of the caste rules or etiquette will end in their abruptly leaving the hall. The touch of the Nayar pollutes the Brahmans, and they themselves in turn are polluted by the touch of the low caste Sudras. The consumption of meat does not entail loss of caste, though many abstain from eating it. They may take or drink water from the wells belonging either to their own caste or the three castes above them. Elayathús are their priests, but sometimes their caste-men also officiate as such, and Nambuthiris give *punnydham* (holy water) to the Nayars under pollution. Being in close contact with the Brahmans, they learn to conduct themselves as the Brahmans do, and their morning and evening baths and their worship in temples are as punctual as those of the priestly class. ⁵⁶⁴ [264] [574] [796] [576] [262] [271] [793] [783]

Clothing is of considerable hygienic importance in the life of a nation, and hygiene plays a considerable part in the dress of a Nayar. A piece of cloth, two to two-and-a-half yards long and one-and-a-half yards broad, is worn round the loins. It must touch the ground or very nearly so, and this method of wearing the cloth gives a simplicity and dignity most suitable to their classic features. A small upper garment is also worn while at home. A Nayar always carries an umbrella while walking in the sun, but there is no covering for the head. ²⁹¹ [293]

Dress.

291 is no covering for the head. This forms the costume of a
 [292] large majority of them. On special occasions or when he goes
 to public places, he has the same loin cloth, while a richer
 cloth (*pāvu mundu*), somewhat longer and broader, is worn over
 [464] the upper part of the body. As has already been said, Nayars
 [177] are to be found in all grades of public service, and these as well
 as others wear a kind of a neat loin cloth, with a shirt and
 coat together with a turban to cover the head, while others
 more fashionable appear in European costume with turbans
 instead of hats; others again wear hats as well, but their num-
 ber is few. Among the poorer classes, the loin cloth is not
 larger than a yard-and-a-half or two by three-fourth of a
 yard.

302 The men shave their faces and bodies clean, leaving an
 oval patch of hair on the top of the head, while some grow it
 over a large surface of the head. In both cases, care is taken
 to keep the tufts sufficiently long, smooth and oily, and this
 [177] adds considerably to their neat and handsome appearance; but
 it is becoming the fashion to crop the hair and to dress it in
 the fashion of the Europeans.

291 The Nayar women wear an inner garment round the loins
 and this is covered by an outer garment which is usually two-
 and-a-half yards in length and one-and-a-half yards in breadth.
 Sometimes, instead of two cloths, one cloth sufficiently long for
 the purpose is worn. The dress is white, and sufficiently de-
 cent to cover the lower part of the body, and a small upper cloth
 serves as a covering above the waist. The Nayar women of the pre-
 sent day wear petticoats and cover the upper part of their body
 [369] with a piece of cloth. It is curious to notice that this form of
 [178] dress does not find favour (in the rural parts) with the Nambu-
 thiris who are either their landlords or to whom they owe some
 kind of allegiance or subordination. The absence of any cover-
 ing for the bosom in ordinary female dress has drawn much
 ridicule on the Nayars, and this custom has been much mis-
 [548] understood by foreigners. So far from indicating immodesty,
 it is looked upon by the people themselves in exactly the oppo-
 site light, for among them prostitutes only cover the breasts.
 "A custom has in it nothing indecent when it is universal," as
 [171] one of the travellers philosophically remarks (Dall). It is, in
 [576] fact, a mark of disrespect to one's own elders and betters for
 either a male or female of the Nayar caste, and of all castes

below it, to cover the upper part of the body, and traces of the same custom can still be found among other Dravidian tribes, some of them being people who are anything but uncivilized. The prohibition applies both to males and females. Men moreover cannot wear caps, turbans or shoes, and must divest themselves of these luxuries, when they meet their elders, even though the meeting takes place in the middle of the road. Until 1865, it was forbidden by law for women of the Chóvans and of those of the lower castes to wear any clothing above the loins. The present generation of Nayar women, except perhaps the servants and the poor, have taken to the use of an upper garment and petticoat, in the same way as the Nayar males now freely use a second cloth. Young girls wear a piece of cloth round the loins, while those of four and five years of age wear a small strip of cloth, or a piece of the bark of areca palm. Generally young children of both sexes go about naked.

The subject of hair-dressing and personal adornment is more psychological and ethnological than hygienic. The Nayar women take special care in the growth and preservation of their hair. They use a kind of medicinal oil to improve its growth, and to keep it smooth and shiny. Many a young woman's plait of hair reaches the knee or even lower, and this adds greatly to her beauty. The hair is parted in the middle and tied either tight to the ears or twisted up in front in a sort of cone or sometimes tied into a knot behind.

The Nayar women are fond of jewellery. They are no doubt partial to gold, but unlike their Brahman sisters they wear very few ornaments for daily use. The oldest ornament of the Nayar lady is the *nigapatam* or serpent's hood, so called from the shape of the pendant. The ear-ornament is the *thóda*, which is a double convex disc, the front surface of which is either plain or set with rubies, for the wearing of which the ear-lobes are sufficiently dilated. This dilating process begins at a very early age, and the ear-lobes, in the case of a majority of the women, become so far distended as to make it possible to wear *thódas* of more than an inch in diameter. The tendency at present is to wear small ones which do not require much dilation. Then come the ornaments for the nose which are *múkkuthi* and *nathu*. These do not find favour with the young women of these days, and what is called the nose-screw set with a ruby has taken their place.

POLYANDRY OF THE THANDANS, KAMMALANS, ETC.

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Respect Towards a Superior, Towards a God, Towards a respected Parent, or towards the higher casteman, was always shown in Kerala by not wearing anything in his presence above the waist, be one man or woman. Basically, this has changed but little, the Nambudri Brahmin always praying in his private temple with only a loin cloth on, the modern Tiya factory girl now removing the blouse which she has taken to wearing before some important personage of her kin group, so that her breasts are exposed. What is a less frequent sight nowadays is Nayar, Tiya or Kammalan women in the streets and on the roads without some covering over the upper parts of their bodies. Lower caste people, however, Cherumas, Pulayas and aboriginals, being less affected by progress, are still to be seen on the highways, their shapely bodies exposed from the waist upwards.

A striking phenomenon in Kerala is the coexistence, even today, of the two radically opposed systems of *marumakkathayam* (matriliny) and of *makkathayam* (patriliny). In the first, children are born into their mother's caste, while in the other they are born into their father's caste. Inheritance is through the mother's brother in the first instance, and through the father in the second. The matrilineal people are grouped in matrilineal clans called *tarawads*, of which the senior male member, the *karanavan*, is the recognized head; the patrilineal people have patrilineal clans called by the same name, *tarawad*, also with the senior male as the *karanavan*, but at the same time, they observe descent through the mother, and all are members of matrilineal descent groups known as *illams* or *kiriyaams*. While castes and, strictly speaking, subcastes are in principle endogamous, clans and lineages are definitely exogamous, marriage being matrilocal in the case of matrilineal people and patrilocal in the case of patrilineal people.¹

Of the high castes, only the Nambudri Brahmins are *makkathayam*. They have patrilineal *gothras* or lineages which are exogamous, and patrilineal clans like *tarawads* which they, however, call *illams*. In olden days, only the eldest son could contract a regular marriage within his caste, marriage being polygamous and patrilocal. The younger sons were either expected to live as *brahmacharyas* (bachelor religious devotees) or could cohabit with Nayar women in a form of union known as *sambandham* to which we shall revert in a moment. They were maintained by their own efforts (they generally became cooks) and by a meagre allowance from the family *illam*. This has now been changed by

¹ I continue to make use of the terms *matrilocal* and *patrilocal* here, rather than *uxorilocal* and *virilocal* as still being perfectly adequate as they were for Ceylon previously.

NAYAR

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near the house, round which he makes three pradakshinams, pouring water from a kindi round the foot of the tree as he does so. The procession then returns to the house, and on the way an old woman of the family proclaims the baby's name aloud for the first time in the form of a question, asking it 'Krishnan' (for instance), 'dost thou see the sky?' In some cases, the father simply calls out the name twice.

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"The Vidyarambham ceremony to celebrate the beginning of the child's education takes place in the fifth or seventh year. In some places, the child is first taken to the temple, where some water sanctified by mantrams is poured over his head by the Shāntikāran (officiating priest). The ceremony at the house is opened by Ganapathi pūja performed by an Ezhuttacchan, or by a Nambūdri, or another Nāyar. The Ezhuttacchan writes

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on the child's tongue with a gold fanam (coin) the invocation to Ganapathi (Hari Sri Ganapathayi nama), or sometimes the fifty-one letters of the Malayalam alphabet, and then grasps the middle finger of the child's right hand, and with it traces the same letters in parched rice. He also gives the child an ola (strip of palm leaf) inscribed with them, and receives in return a small fee

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in cash. Next the child thrice touches first the Ezhuttacchan's feet, and then his own forehead with his right hand, in token of that reverent submission to the teacher, which seems to have been the key-note of the old Hindu system of education.

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"The Kāthukuttu or ear-boring is performed either at the same time as the Pāla-kudi or the Choulam, or at any time in the fifth or seventh year. The operator, who may be any one possessing the necessary skill, pierces first the right and then the left ear with two gold or silver wires brought by the goldsmith, or with karamullu

tamarind, and mango. The whole house is known as ⁶⁰⁰ ³⁴² vitu. The houses are built on various models, such as pattayappura, nālukettu, ettukettu, and kuttikettu."

Concerning the dress of the Nāyars, Mr. N. 291 Subramani Aiyar writes that "the males dress themselves in a mundu (cloth), a loose lower garment, and a towel. A neriyatu, or light cloth of fine texture with coloured border, is sometimes worn round the mundu on festive occasions. Coats and caps are recent introductions, (177) but are eschewed by the orthodox as unnational. It is noted by Mr. Logan that 'the women clothe themselves in a single white cloth of fine texture, reaching from the waist to the knees, and occasionally, when abroad, they throw over the shoulder and bosom another similar cloth. But by custom the Nāyar women go uncovered from the waist. Upper garments indicate lower caste, or (564) sometimes, by a strange reversal of Western notions, immodesty.' Edward Ives, who came to Anjengo about 1740, observes that 'the groves on each bank of the river are chiefly planted with cocoanut trees, and have been inhabited by men and women in almost a pure state of nature, for they go with their breasts and bellies entirely naked. This custom prevails universally throughout (564) every caste from the poorest planter of rice to the (184) daughter or consort of the king upon the throne.'"

[According to ancient custom, Nāyar women in Travancore used to remove their body-cloth in the presence of the Royal Family. But, since 1856, this custom has (576) been abolished, by a proclamation during the reign of (643) H.H. Vanchi Bala Rāma Varma Kulasakhara Perumal Bhagiodya Rāma Varma. In a critique on the Indian Census Report, 1901, Mr. J. D. Rees observes * that

564 here turns out to be patrilineal and patrilocal. We shall see that, as
611 usual, the question of descent is attached to the same general struc-
[591] tures as elsewhere.

613 We first note that the "patrilineage" of the South is called a *taravad*
like the matrilineal units of the Nayar. The patrilineage is reported to
be exogamous with a depth of five to seven generations united by the
worship of lineage gods, ancestors, and snakes. Marriage tends to be
[595] patrilocal, and one of the interesting features of the Tiyyar of this
[591] area is that, as with the Sinhalese, polyandrous marriages are freely
[171] permitted. A woman is married to a group of brothers who have access
585 to her, it is said, by order of seniority. The ceremony of marriage
171 again involves the gift of the cloth, and we note the custom of feeding
the groom or grooms and the bride with porridge and milk as with
various groups in Ceylon.

593 Inheritance is in the male line, but women retain rights in their
[428] natal household. Indeed, this right is expressed in the customary rela-
[586] tions between brothers and sisters. At divorce, the woman returns to
her brother. Her eldest brother is considered her guardian. At the
[765] death of a married woman, her brothers and their children observe
[783] ritual pollution. At the death of a man, his sister's sons observe pol-
lution and perform mourning offerings to his spirit.

604 The customary claim of the MB and the FZ are given recognition in
588 numerous ceremonies. In the prepuberty rituals, a girl goes through
[613] a mock-marriage ceremony with a boy from a "lineage" into which
[605] she might marry, who clearly stands to her in the relation of cross-
cousin. Her "mother's brother's wife" (FZ?) parts her hair in certain
pregnancy ceremonies. The ritual husband-boy is brought by his MB,
and the girl by her MB. The boy places the *tali* necklace—indicative
of married status—on her neck, where it is tied by her FZ.

582 Gough notes that cross-cousin marriage is "preferential," though
605 with the observation that it is not "enjoined to the extent" that it is
114 in the North (1955a, p. 62). It is clear that this statement refers to
actual cross-cousin, not categorical cross-cousin, marriage. We are
informed that parallel cousins on both sides are tabooed and must
conclude that here again we have the Dravidian pattern of categori-
cal cross-cousin marriage.

601 I have no information about the terminology of reference or address,
576 though it seems likely that terms of reference, at least, are identical to
those of the North Tiyyar.

121 I think that all the elements of the general structure can be detected
602 in this system. There is categorical cross-cousin marriage, and the
various claims of the MB and FZ upon Ego are indicated in ritual
terms. This is quite in accordance, as we noted before, with the strong